



Staff Report

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TO: Mayor, City Council, and Planning Commission

THROUGH: Steve Powers, City Manager

FROM: Norman Wright, Community Development Director

SUBJECT:

Joint Work Session on the Our Salem project.

Ward(s): All Wards

Councilor(s): All Councilors

Neighborhood(s): All Neighborhoods

Result Area(s): Good Governance; Natural Environment Stewardship; Safe Community; Safe, Reliable and Efficient Infrastructure; Strong and Diverse Economy; Welcoming and Livable Community.

ISSUE:

Joint City Council and Planning Commission Work Session on the Our Salem

RECOMMENDATION:

Information only

SUMMARY:

The City of Salem has developed a draft Our Salem Vision as part of the City's multi-year project to update the Salem Area Comprehensive Plan (Comprehensive Plan). The document lays the foundation for that update by describing and illustrating the community's vision for future growth and development in broad goals and a proposed Comprehensive Plan Map (**Attachment 1: Draft Our Salem Vision Document**). The draft vision is the culmination of extensive community engagement that has spanned roughly a year.

The work session is the first opportunity at a public meeting to discuss the community's vision for the future as it is described in the draft Our Salem Vision. After the work session, City staff intends to conduct public outreach on the draft vision and then use the input from the community to make revisions. City staff plans to present the final Our Salem Vision to the City Council for acceptance in

early 2021. If the vision is accepted, the proposed goals and map would be carried forward into the future update of the Comprehensive Plan.

The proposed changes to the Comprehensive Plan Map can be viewed online here:

<https://saalem.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=36df9887a275455fbc8d34f055dd090e>

Information about what the proposed changes mean can be found online here:

<https://www.cityofsalem.net/Pages/our-salem-vision-map.aspx>

FACTS AND FINDINGS:

Project Overview and Outreach

The City kicked off the visioning phase of the Our Salem project in late summer 2019. City staff conducted extensive outreach throughout the Salem area to understand the community's priorities, concerns, and ideas for future growth and development. City staff engaged residents, businesses, neighborhoods, community organizations, partner agencies, and others through a variety of in-person and online meetings, events, workshops, surveys, webinars, emails, social media, and other outreach tools. The project website, www.cityofsalem.net/our-salem <http://www.cityofsalem.net/our-salem>, became the hub of information and updates.

A Technical Advisory Committee consisting of staff from all City Departments and partner agencies - including Cherriots, the Salem-Keizer School District, Marion County, Polk County, the Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development, and the Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments - provided input at key milestones. City staff also mailed a flyer to all property owners that could be impacted by proposed changes to the Comprehensive Plan Map, inviting them to virtual meetings. Roughly 20 property owners attended, with the vast majority supporting the proposed changes.

The visioning phase had three major milestones.

- **Visioning:** In the fall and winter, City staff conducted public outreach throughout the community to understand people's overall priorities and goals for future growth. City staff, working with a consultant team, also asked the community to show on maps where different types of development were desired in the future.
- **Scenarios:** Using that input, City staff worked with the consultant team to create guiding principles and four scenarios for future growth. The scenarios were maps that tested various ideas for where different development types should occur.
- **Community vision:** The community's input was used to develop the draft vision, which is contained in the draft Our Salem vision document.

Results

As mentioned earlier, the draft Our Salem Vision document includes goals for future growth and

development as well as a proposed Comprehensive Plan Map. It also describes several of the big ideas that came from the community and that informed the proposed Comprehensive Plan Map.

- **Goals:** The draft Vision describes goals for future growth that focus on a variety of topics: Community engagement, land use and urbanization, housing, economic development, parks and recreation, natural resources and natural hazards, Willamette Greenway, transportation, and community and public facilities and services. The goals reflect priorities that the community has expressed throughout the visioning phase of this Our Salem project. If the Our Salem Vision is accepted by the City Council, the goals will be carried forward and included in the updated Comprehensive Plan.

Detailed policies will be developed to support each goal. City staff has already started compiling a list of potential policies and ideas, which are based on community input and the existing Comprehensive Plan policies. (The list is included at the end of the draft Our Salem Vision document.) The list is a first draft. City staff expects to revise and add to the list after more public outreach is conducted on policy ideas in the spring of 2021.

- **Big ideas:** Throughout the last year of outreach, several big ideas arose about where different types of development are generally desired in the Salem area. Those ideas are reflected in both the draft goals as well as the proposed Comprehensive Plan Map. The ideas include the following: Encourage a mix of uses in the downtown area and along major corridors, particularly those with frequent transit service; encourage a broader range of housing types and distribute multifamily housing across Salem; allow pockets of small-scale businesses in single-family areas (e.g., neighborhood hubs); and create flexibility in where commercial uses are allowed, while maintaining existing industrial areas.
- **Map:** The proposed Comprehensive Plan Map reflects the big ideas and other input the community has provided over the last year. The map shows proposed changes to the Comprehensive Plan designation of properties across the Salem area. If the Our Salem Vision is accepted by the City Council, City staff will start developing a draft zoning map and detailed zoning code changes that would need to be made to implement the proposed Comprehensive Plan Map. For example, if an area is proposed to be changed to Mixed Use on the Comprehensive Plan Map, the zoning map would need to be updated to reflect the specific mixed-use zone that would apply to that area. Any changes to the Comprehensive Plan Map, zoning map, and zoning code would not be effective until they went through a formal adoption process, which includes public hearings.

Next Steps

City staff plans to conduct public outreach on the draft Our Salem Vision in October and November to get the community's feedback. Outreach will include an online survey in English and Spanish; a webinar on Tuesday, September 29 at 11 a.m.; and virtual meetings with community groups across Salem. Roughly 25 virtual meetings have already been scheduled.

Input from the community will be used to refine the Our Salem Vision. City staff plans to present the final Our Salem Vision to the City Council in January and ask for acceptance. If accepted, City staff will take that direction from the City Council to continue the work needed to update the

Comprehensive Plan.

That is expected to include weekly virtual public meetings on different policy areas; the purpose will be to review, revise, and add to the draft policies that will support the goals in the updated Comprehensive Plan. City staff anticipates those meetings to occur through the spring of 2021. City staff will also work on developing proposed zoning map and zoning code changes to implement the Our Salem Vision. All of this work will be done with assistance from staff across City departments and partner agencies.

City staff hopes to bring a proposed updated Comprehensive Plan through the adoption process later next fall or winter.

Collaboration with Climate Action Planning

The City of Salem began working on 18-month process to develop a Climate Action Plan (CAP) in July. City staff working on the Our Salem project have been and will continue to work on and collaborate with the CAP project, which is being led by the Public Works Department. Both projects are expected to include goals, policies, strategies, and/or actions that aim to reduce GHG emissions and adjust to the impacts of climate change.

The two projects will inform each other. For example, policies that come out of the CAP project related to development can be incorporated into the proposed Comprehensive Plan update. Currently, the draft Our Salem Vision includes a broad goal to reduce GHG emissions, but if a specific target for reductions is developed as part of the CAP project, that target can be incorporated into the proposed Comprehensive Plan update.

BACKGROUND:

The City Council funded the Our Salem project in 2017. The funding followed the strategic planning process when the community identified the need to develop a vision for growth and development. Salem's portion of the urban growth boundary is projected to continue adding residents - roughly 60,000 more people - and jobs through 2035, and the Our Salem project provides the community with an opportunity to guide how and where that growth occurs. This multi-year project will update the Comprehensive Plan, which is the City's long-range plan for future growth and development.

The City started the Our Salem project in the fall of 2018, working with a consultant team led by Fregonese Associates. The first phase focused on examining the existing conditions of the city and evaluating difference scenarios for how Salem could grow under current policies. It also included the community's first greenhouse gas ([GHG](https://www.cityofsalem.net/citydocuments/final-community-greenhouse-gas-inventory.pdf)) inventory <<https://www.cityofsalem.net/citydocuments/final-community-greenhouse-gas-inventory.pdf>>.

The second phase of the project has focused on community-wide visioning. City staff have been talking with community members across the Salem area about their priorities, concerns, and ideas for future growth and development. This phase will culminate in a final Our Salem Vision document, which will lay the foundation for phase three of the Our Salem project - the City's update to the Comprehensive Plan.

Eunice Kim
Long Range Planning Manager

Attachments:

1. Draft Our Salem Vision.